

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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R 271150Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3638

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

USUN NEW YORK 779

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5257

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, AINR, TS

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE AT COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED MEETING

REF: TUNIS 4902

1. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT IN ADDITION TO FOREIGN MINISTER HABIB CHATTI THE GOT DELEGATION TO THE NAM COLOMBO MEEGINGS WILL INCLUDE AHMED GHEZAL, DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE AND AMERICA IN THE MFA, MAHMOUD MESTIRI, TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW, ANOUAR BERRAIRES, A STAFF AIDE IN FONMIN CHATTI'S OFFICE, AND MOHAMED RIZA, AN OFFICIAL OF THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE FOR INFORMATION.

2. FOLLOWING IS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THESE OFFICIALS:

AHMED GHEZAL- IS ONE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MOST SENIOR CAREER DIPLOMATS AND HAS SERVED IN VARIOUS POSTS THROUGOOUT THE WORLD. BEFORE RETURNING TO TUNIS IN MARCH 1974, HE WAS DCM AT THE TUNISIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. IN DEALINGS WITH HIM OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, WE HAVE FOUND HIM TO BE CORDIAL AND OCCASIONALLY HELPFUL BUT GUARDED.
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HE TAKES NO POLITICAL INITIATIVES HIMSELF IN DEALINGS

WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMATS, AND HIS MOST IMPORTANT SERVICE HAS BEEN QUICK, RELIABLE CONTACT WITH TOP POLICY MAKING LEVELS OF GOT. WE REGARD HIM AS PERSONALLY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE USG AND EXPECT THAT HE WILL SEEK TO BE HELPFUL IF APPROACHED BUT WILL MAKE NO BINDING COMMITMENTS. HE SPEAKS ADEQUATE ENGLISH. HE IS A QUIET, LOW-KEY, REFINED MAN AND IS NOT LIKELY TO APPRECIATE HIGH-PRESSURE APPROCHES.

MAHMOUD MESTIRI - A CAREER DIPLOMAT, MESTIRI HAS SERVED AS GOT AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW SINCE FEBRUARY 1974 WITH CONCURRENT ACCREDITATION TO WARSAW. HE HAS A REPUTATION AS AN ABLE DIPLOMAT WITH A PROMISING CAREER BUT HIS ADVANCE IN THE TUNISIAN FOREIGN SERVICE HAS BEEN FROZEN SINCE HE DEVELOPED A PERSONAL FEUD WITH THE PRESIDENT'S SON. IN HIS DEALINGS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS, HE HAS REFLECTED GOT GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY; I.E., CLOSE AFFINITY FOR U.S. BUT CAREFUL BALANCING OF PUBLIC POSITIONS IN ORDER NOT TO OFFEND RADICAL STATES. WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT MESTIRI HAS RECENTLY BEEN APPOINTED GOT PERMREP AT THE UN. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH IN ADDITION TO NATIVE FRENCH AND ARABIC.

ANOUAR BERRAIES - BERRAIES WAS FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS WHEN HE OCCUPIED LESSER POST IN PROTOCOL DIVISION OF MFA, BUT WE HAVE HAD LITTLE CONTACT WITH HIM SINCE HE BECAME A STAFF AIDE. HE IS, EVERTHELESS, NOT A POLICY-MAKING OFFICER AND WILL PROBABLY SERVE IN COLOMBO AS THE MINISTER'S RUDIMENTARY SECRETARIAT. HE DOES NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, SPEAK ENGLISH, BUT HE HAS ITALIAN IN ADDITION TO NATIVE FRENCH AND ARABIC. HE SERVED AT THE TUNISIAN EMBASSY IN ROME BEFORE RETURNING TO TUNIS IN 1974.

MOHAMED RIZA - RIZA IS NOT KNOWN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS.

3. OFFICIALS FROM MFA AND OTHER MINISTRIES MAY BE INCLUDED ON GOT DELEGATION. WE WILL REPORT NAMES AND BIO DATA WHEN AVAILABLE.

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